



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL

GOVERNOR

HAROLD LEGGETT, Ph.D.

SECRETARY

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Contact: Rodney Mallett

Telephone: 225.219.3964

Agreement calls for air monitoring effort along Mississippi River

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality and the American Waterways Operators are partnering on a study to determine the effect of barge traffic on air monitors and air quality. The two parties signed a memorandum of understanding today that outlines an in-depth plan to determine if barges are impacting volatile organic compound readings at the DEQ's Carville air monitoring site, and possibly at other monitors.

The Carville monitoring site is located at a bend in the Mississippi River. It was chosen because of its location and because it reports higher annual ozone readings than other monitors in the region. The plan calls for the DEQ air monitor to automatically take a sample when VOCs reach a pre-determined level. An e-mail will be sent to DEQ and the barge industry representatives who will take a snapshot of the river traffic in the vicinity of the monitor.

Then, the barge owner companies will be contacted and asked what they were shipping on the day the monitor was triggered. The American Waterway Operators and DEQ will be able to determine if there was any product moving on the river that may have triggered the VOC sampler.

"We're pleased to have The American Waterways Operators on our team for this important project," said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett. "The American Waterways Operators' participation and determination to investigate the possibility of barge traffic contribution to any air-quality issues in the area is a great indication of the partnerships that can be formed to find solutions for Louisiana."

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